

Last week we divided chapter 7 into three parts: David's desire to build a house for God (vv1-9), God's promise to build David a house (vv10-17), and David's response to God's promise (vv18-29). Having considered the first two last week, this brings us this morning to verses 18-29 and David's Prayer of Praise.

But before we come to this passage (and theme of David's prayer of praise), let me say a few words, by way of introduction, about prayer in general.

(1) The importance of prayer. Any person who simply reads through the Bible, can see the utter importance of prayer. It's been rightly said, that prayer is to the soul what breathing is to the body. Remember, prayer is not only a means of grace but a source of praise. In other words, we receive from God through prayer, and we give to God in prayer.

(2) The difficulty of prayer. Any person who has been a Christian for any length of time, has to admit that prayer is oftentimes very difficult. We are often spiritually indifferent, and when we do pray, oftentimes, we are easily distracted and unfocused. There are of course, three causes behind this difficulty—our evil flesh, a distracting world, and an enticing devil.

(3) The examples of prayer. Both the Old and New Testaments are filled with wonderful examples of prayer. Prayers that are given for our instruction and encouragement. In light of the importance and difficulty of prayer, God has graciously filled His word with various and varied inspired examples of prayer (and out of all them, none are more beautiful and instructive than David's response to God's gracious covenant).

Thus, I want to examine David's prayer of praise as an example of true prayer, and I want to suggest three things from it – its soil, its basis, and its goal—that is, the soil, basis, and goal of David's prayer of praise (these are not in chronological order, we will be bouncing around throughout the prayer).

- I. Its Soil
- II. Its Basis
- III. Its Goal

I. Its Soil

1. The soil of true prayer is comprised of three things: (1) a sense of God's presence, (2) our native unworthiness, and (3) our collective privilege.
2. (1) A sense of God's presence, v18—"Then King David went in and sat before the LORD"—he got alone with God.
3. The phrase "before the LORD" is an important phrase, that if you remember, we saw several times back in chapter 6.
4. 2Sam.6:14—"Then David danced before the LORD with all his might" v21—"I will play music before the LORD."
5. The phrase "before the LORD" doesn't speak of location but mindset—you can come "before the LORD" anywhere.
6. Now, this of course doesn't deny that there's a unique sense in which we collectively come before the LORD as a church on the Lord's Day.
7. But David was before the LORD as he danced (6:14) and he came before the LORD in prayer in chapter 7:18.
8. Thus, to come "before the LORD" means, you come before God mindful of His majestic and glorious presence.
9. (2) A sense of our unworthiness, v18—"Who am I, O Lord God? And what is my house, that You have brought me this far?"
10. In other words, who am I that I should be the object of such grace! Who am I, that I should receive such blessing!

11. At the very heart of any proper response to God's grace is a sense of amazement. A sense of our unworthiness.
12. Now if you remember, at the very heart of God's promise to David was a son whose kingdom would be established.
13. This had an original fulfillment in Solomon and an ultimate fulfillment in Christ (whose kingdom is everlasting).
14. According to Acts 2:30, David because he was a prophet, knew that this promise had its final fulfillment in Christ.
15. Thus, it's this promise that David here responds to—the fact that the Father would bring from his body, the Messiah.
16. Who am I, O Lord God! That I should be given such privilege! That I should be chosen to play such a place in redemption!
17. Now, obviously, none of us have been given such a privilege. None of us are the great granddad of the Messiah.
18. But we all have been taken from this world and made kings and priests to God in Christ—we've been made sons.
19. This is at the very heart of true prayer! A humble acknowledgement of our native unworthiness and neediness.
20. This is at the very heart of true prayer! A sense of our need! Prayer is an expression or acknowledgment of need!
21. It's for this reason, David then traces all of God's grace and kindness, to His sovereign and uninfluenced will.
22. V21—"For Your words sake, and according to Your own heart (will or desire), You have done all these great things, to make Your servant know them."
23. Here we find the root-system behind or beneath our salvation—the sovereign will or desire of a gracious God!
24. (3) A sense of our collective privilege—true prayer grows in the soil of the knowledge of our privileges in Christ.
25. Thus, David speaks of how great God is (v22) and how privileged His people are (vv23-24), v22—"Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears."
26. In other words, there is no God like our God—the one and only true God—the great and powerful Creator and Redeemer.
27. And yet, having spoke about how great God is (v22), David then goes on to describe how privileged His people are.
28. Verses 23-24—"And who is like Your people, like Israel, the one nation on the earth whom God went to redeem for Himself as a people to make for Himself a name—and to do for Yourself great and awesome deeds for Your land—before Your people whom You redeemed for Yourself from Egypt, the nations, and their gods? For You have made Your people Israel Your very own people forever; and You, LORD, have become their God."
29. Our privilege is one with two sides—we are God's people and He is our God—this is the nature of God's covenant.
30. By the way, I think this is the meaning of that phrase at the end of v19—"Is this the manner of man, O Lord GOD?"
31. That is, this isn't the manner of man! This is not the way man things and acts! This is the way God thinks and acts!
32. Thus, from this soil three essential plants grow necessary for true prayer—reverence, humility, and adoration.
33. (a) Reverence—we come before God as our Father, yes, but we come before Him as our Father who is in heaven.
34. (b) Humility—we come before God as one who by nature is not deserving of grace, but deserving of God's wrath.

35. (c) Adoration—we come before God as one who has been converted, forgiven, accepted, and loved, all in Christ.
36. This is hinted all throughout the prayer, in that the translators have repeatedly added the little "O" before the names of God.
37. V18—"Who am I, O Lord GOD?" v19—"And yet this was a small thing in Your sight, O Lord GOD" v22—"Therefore You are great, O Lord GOD."
38. They've added this word (letter) to underscore the tone of the prayer—it communicates affection and adoration.
39. I remember reading somewhere in Martyn Lloyd-Jones, where he described the religion of the puritans as "O Religion."
40. He said, you can turn to any page of their writings, and you'll find the terms "O" "Ah" and "Alas" dozens of times.
41. Well, where did the puritans get that "O Religion" but from David, and other Biblical writers who expressed deep adoration for God.
42. O brethren, surely, we understand, it's not about the "Os" or "Ahs" but the heart and devotion that's behind them!
43. How does this devotion or adoration come, but by cultivating a sense of God's presence, our unworthiness, and our gospel privilege!
44. Hymn—"Upon that cross of Jesus, Mine eye at times can see, the very dying form of One, who suffered there for me; And from my smitten heart, with tears, two wonders I confess, the wonders of His glorious love, and my own worthlessness."

II. Its Basis

1. The basis or foundation of prayer is threefold—(1) the names of God, (2) the character of God, and (3) the promises of God.
2. (1) The names of God—God in His grace, has condescended in Scripture, to reveal Himself through various names.
3. Though there are various names, they all reveal to us the same Being—they reveal to us the character of God.
4. Throughout the prayers of the Bible, the names of God are used wisely, intentionally, judicially, and reverently.
5. And all of these are true of David's use of God's names here in 2Sam.7—if you notice, he sprinkles his prayer with God's names.
6. V18—"O Lord GOD" v19—"O Lord GOD...O Lord GOD" v20—"Lord GOD" v22—"O Lord GOD" v24—"LORD" v25—"O LORD God" v26—"The LORD of hosts" v27—"O LORD of hosts, God of Israel" v28—"O Lord GOD" v29—"O Lord GOD."
7. In almost every verse, David uses some form or variation of the name of God—he basically uses three names for God.
8. (a) Adonai—this word is usually translated Lord (with small letters), v18—"Who am I, O Lord (Adonai) GOD?"
9. The word literally means "Sovereign" or "Lord" and refers to God's authority of all things in heaven and on earth.
10. (b) Yahweh—because there are two slightly different variations of this word used, it's translated in two ways (but both times our translators use all capital letters).
11. For example, you find the same word (in its two variations) in v18—"LORD" and "GOD"—same word with slight variation.
12. Thus, throughout this prayer, wherever you have the words GOD and LORD in all capital letters, it's the Hebrew name *Yahweh*.
13. This is the Hebrew name, that's translated in its verb form as I AM (Ex.3:14), and refers to God self-existence.
14. Because it carries with it the ideas of self-existence and immutability, it's often associated with God's covenant faithfulness (it's used over 7,000 in OT).

15. (c) Elohim—this word is usually translated "God" (with little letters), v25—"Now, O LORD (*Yahweh*) God (*Elohim*)."
16. Elohim is the plural form of the name El, which literally means "strong or mighty"—it's used over 2,600 times in the OT.
17. Observation—Christians must know God's names and use them intentionally in addressing Him in praise and prayer.
18. We don't have time, but later (perhaps this afternoon), who can study this prayer and find that David doesn't use God's names flippantly.
19. But he uses them intentionally and strategically, to strengthen his prayer and bring glory and honor to his God.
20. Friends, I am not suggesting we need to learn the actual Hebrew terms, but we do need to know their English meanings.
21. And we do need to learn how to use them intentionally and strategically in addressing God in prayer and praise.
22. God has revealed Himself through these names, and we must use them with wisdom, reverence, awe, and adoration.
23. (2) The character of God—before I go any further, let me remind you that God's names and attributes are one.
24. All the names of God and all the attributes of God describe to us God—they are all a description of God Himself.
25. Now, to be honest, David doesn't list many attributes in this prayer, which is different than most Biblical prayers.
26. But I want to make this point, because the one attribute he does mention, is really a summary of all other attribute.
27. V22—"Therefore You are great, O Lord God. For there is none like You, nor is there any God besides You, according to all that we have heard with our ears."
28. David describes God as "Great" which literally means "majestic"—He's great in His nature, persons, purposes, promises, and works.
29. (3) The promise(s) of God—all true prayer is based upon the promise of God within His word—it's the foundation of prayer.
30. V25—"Now, O LORD God, the word which You have spoken concerning You servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as You have said."
31. V27—"For You, O LORD of hosts, God of Israel, have revealed this to You servant, saying, 'I will build you a house.' Therefore Your servant has found it in his heart to pray this prayer to You."
32. When says he "found it in his heart to pray" he means, he found courage and motivation to come before God with prayer.
33. Put another way—it was the knowledge of God's promise to him, that moved him to respond in praise and prayer.
34. It's almost as if David is saying—"I found this prayer in my heart, as I pondered or thought upon His promises."
35. V28—"And now, O Lord GOD, You are God, and Your words are true, and You have promised this goodness to Your servant."
36. V29—"Now therefore, let it please You to bless the house of Your servant, that it may continue before You forever; for You, O Lord GOD, have spoken it, and with Your blessing let the house of Your servant be blessed forever."
37. Brethren, in all of these verses we have mention made of God's promises and words—they are the fuel to prayer.
38. (a) Promises must be known—that is, they must be understood. We must read about them in the word of God.
39. I trust this goes without saying—Christians need to know their Bibles and especially God's promises within them.
40. You know there's a sense in which we can reduce much (if not most) of the Bible into two words—precepts and promises.

41. Precepts are verses that describe what we're to do for God, whereas promises are verses that describe what God does for us.
42. (b) Promises must be believed—that is, they must be embraced. Unbelieved promises are like uneaten bread and meat.
43. For example, let's say you have a sickness that's very treatable with the right medicine—but it's not enough to possess the medicine.
44. Merely the possession of medicine benefits no one—it must be taken—so too, God's promises must be believed.
45. Here I need to take a few minutes and remind you of the necessary relationship between faith and the promises of God.
46. Our faith does not make God's promises any more sure or certain—God's promises are not dependent upon us.
47. But unless God's promises are believed, unless they are mingled with faith, they will not bring healing to our soul.
48. Heb.4:2—"The gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, but being mixed with faith in those who heard it."
49. (c) Promises must be prayed back—that is, we must pray back to God the very promises that He's given to us.
50. Joel Beeke—"Just as we hope for and believe what God has promised, so we must pray for what God has promised."
51. V25—"Now, O LORD God, the word which You have spoken concerning You servant and concerning his house, establish it forever and do as You have said."
52. O friends, this is the very backbone of true prayer—praying back to God the promises found within His word.
53. Alexander Maclaren—"The main lesson of the prayer is that God's promise should ever be the basis and measure of prayer. The mould into which our petitions should run is, 'Do as Thou has said.' There is no presumption in taking God at His word. True prayer catches up the promises that have fallen from heaven, and sends them back again, as feathers to the arrows of its petitions."
54. Obs.1—prayer must comprise praise (vv19-24) and petition (vv25-29)—we should praise Him for past grace (v18), future grace (v19), and sovereign grace (vv20-21), and we must petition Him to fulfill what He's promised.

III. Its Goal

1. The goal of prayer is the glory of God, v26—"So let your name be magnified forever, saying, 'The LORD of hosts is the God over Israel.'"
2. Why did David ultimately pray this prayer, but so that God (Elohim), Lord (Adonai), LORD (Yahweh) would be glorified.
3. And why is this—well, the answer obvious isn't—only God is worthy of such glory and honor, as expressed in prayer and praise. Amen.